(However, as per the latest information received from the Government of Uttar Pradesh on 16.11.2007, the cane price arrears stands at Rs. 1386.65 crores).

Government of Uttar Pradesh has reported that 14 private sugar mills and 6 co-operative sugar mills have already made 100% cane price payment. Recovery certificates have been issued against 12 sugar mills of private sector who made lowest payment till 31.08.2007. Recovery certificates have also been issued against 64 sugar mills of private sector who had outstanding cane dues even after 31.08.2007. 2 sugar mills have made 100% payment after issue of the Recovery certificates. As regards cane price arrears of cooperative and public sector sugar mills, they have been provided loan assistance and State Government guarantee to take loan from financial institutions.

Smuggling of PDS foodgrains to Bangladesh

†572. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that large portion of foodgrains released for public distribution system is being smuggled to Bangladesh.

(b) if so, whether any steps have been taken to arrest such trends and bring the guilty to book;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the poor are not getting foodgrains from ration shops in many parts of the country including that of West Bengal;

(d) whether it is also a fact that Government has increased the prices of ration foodgrains to be provided to the poor; and

(e) if so, the reasons therefor and its impact on the poor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) Some such reports have been received. They have been sent to the State Government of West Bengal for inquiry and report on Action Taken. Replies of the State Government are still awaited.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) No, Sir

(e) Question does not arise.

Prices of foodgrains for BPL and APL people

†573. SHRI JAI PARKASH AGGARWAL: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the percentage of the people living below poverty line in various States, specially in backward and rural areas of the country alongwith the details of its percentage in the entire country;

(b) whether the prices of the essential commodities and the foodgrains available at fair price shops for the people living above poverty line are almost at par with the prices of the open market;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.